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# Expense Account Accountability Threat To Bureaucrat's Dream

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Livingston Wingate is trembling on the edge of a fundamental discovery for government agencies of all kinds. The discovery is a new method for achieving non-accountability.

dream, and well it might be. It means that the official so blessed can spend money, hire people, open offices and post thousands at his bidding o'er land and sea without ever having to tell anyone why he is doing these things or even what it is he's doing. It amounts to having a key to the Treasury.



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The principle itself is hardly new. For some generations it has been more or less standard operating procedure in time of war. It explains all those non-shaving generals in what was then the Air Corps, millionaire junk dealers and such related phenomena as the rise of the science of employe relations.

American industry began being considerate of its employes in fringe areas at precisely the moment it became profitable to do so. That moment was in World War II, when war contracts were let by the government on the basis of cost plus a percentage for reasonable profit. The declaration that made those things possible was made by the Army to the Congress: "Here come the Nazis, give us the dough."

As is well known, the peace that followed war has never quite settled down to what we remember as peace in the old days. Hence a certain amount of the wartime non-accountability has lingered on in the services. An entirely new area of non-accountability has been staked out and fruitfully expanded by the CIA. The declaration for the spooks has been, "Here come the Commies, give us the dough."

Both of these manifestations of non-accountability, it will be noted, have been the threat of war or the fear of war. It is Mr. Wingate's contribution to evolution of the doc-

trine of non-accountability that he has moved it whole into civil life. He is director of the cumbrously titled HARYOU-ACT, the Office of Economic Opportunity's vicar in Harlem. The home office is holding up a million in grants for HARYOU-ACT and both the city and the feds are investigating the casual handling of about \$400,000 by Mr. Wingate.

At this point in many governmental careers, there is a change to some other line of work, as when Bobby Baker moved from Senate management to resort management. In contrast, Mr. Wingate came back like the Dodgers. In a manner reminiscent of Speaker McCormack explaining how Judge Morrissey's continual flunking of those bar exams was really to his credit, Mr. Wingate sees nothing but virtue in his own free and easy ways with poverty money. Last summer, he avers, "the kids" in Harlem were ready to riot for lack of poverty payments and "I reached in and took the money. I didn't give a continental what account it came from."

To support his conduct further, Mr. Wingate has sketched the outline of a black hate group called the Five Per Centers, another recollection of wartime non-accountability. These "kids" regard themselves as the socially aware five per cent of American Negroes. They plan to demonstrate their social awareness by terror, riots, arson, murder and similar acts. They are held in check, according to Mr. Wingate, only by his handing out the money and doing so without accounting. He says, in effect, call off the auditors or the riots begin. Or, "Here come the terrorist, give me the dough."

Mr. Wingate is interesting in a couple of other ways. For one thing he has taken to referring to himself in the third person, as in, "Kill Wingate if you will, but destroy HARYOU-ACT and you don't even have a pretense of stopping violence."

Don't waste time on the syntax; the sentence won't parse no matter how you try. This usage always means that the user has come to regard himself as a natural force of

some kind. And note also the sense of impending martyrdom in the first two words.

These two things, the use of third person to mean oneself and the appearance of readiness for martyrdom, often come at the same time in the same person. The last figure on the national scene to show both was Senator Joseph R. McCarthy.

More germane to the poverty program itself are Mr. Wingate's ambivalent feelings about what amounts to bribery of Negro hoodlums to cool down. He says that the hoods keep saying, "Look

Wingate, all Whitey wants is to keep us quiet," "Whitey" being Negro slum argot for what higher thinkers call the white power structure.

It is basic to the mystique of the poverty program that all that dough is not bribe but is an effort at remaking lives. Mr. Wingate subscribes to this mystique completely. But when it comes to his own financial accountability, he's right in there "buying time" against terror.

We may reasonably conclude that Mr. Wingate is not, after all against bribing the poor to be still. It just depends on who gets to handle the pay-off. And how.

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